

MERIT SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES



Merit Systems Principles provide the philosophical and fundamental foundation of the entire Federal Human Resources Management system. They are the core values that should be expressed in every human resources decision that is **made**.

There are nine Merit System Principles, which can be found in **Section 2301(b) of title 5, U.S.C.** These Merit System Principles provide guidance for how managers and supervisors, should manage human resources. They are the expected outcomes of good management.

A free course on Merit Systems Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices is provided at [Human Resources University \(HRU\)](#). Registration with HRU is required.

Merit System Principle	Example
1: Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society, and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition.	Recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity.
2: Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition.	All employees and applicants for employment should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.
3: Provide equal pay for equal work and reward excellent performance.	Equal pay should be provided for work of equal value, with appropriate consideration of both national and local rates paid by employers in the private sector, and appropriate incentives and recognition should be provided for excellence in performance.
4: Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.	All employees should maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
5: Manage employees efficiently and effectively.	The Federal work force should be used efficiently and effectively.
6: Retain or separate employees on the basis of their performance.	Employees should be retained on the basis of the adequacy of their performance. Inadequate performance should be corrected, and employees should be separated who cannot or will not improve their performance to meet required standards.
7: Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.	Employees should be provided effective education and training in cases which such education and training would result in better organizational and individual performance.
8. Protect employees from improper influence	Employees should be (A) protected against arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes, and (B) prohibited from using their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for election.
9: Protect employees against reprisal for lawful disclosure of information in "whistleblower" situations (i.e., protect people who report things like illegal and/or wasteful activities).	Employees should be protected against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information which the employees reasonably believe evidences (A) a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or (B) mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.